

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow. Applicant respectfully requests that the foregoing amendments be entered, at least because they merely cancel rejected claims, leaving only claims indicated by the Patent Office as being allowed.

Claims 1-7 and 20 are requested to be cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

This amendment deletes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 8-19 are now pending in this application.

Examiner Interview

Applicant appreciates the telephone interview with Examiner Drodge on December 19, 2006. Applicant's representative, Thomas G. Bilodeau, and Examiner Drodge discussed the rejections of claims 1-7 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first and second paragraphs. Examiner Drodge indicated that amendments to claims 1-7 and 20 to overcome the rejections at this stage in the prosecution, after final amendment, would likely constitute a new issue, and would not likely be entered. Accordingly, applicants have canceled 1-7 and 20 without prejudice or disclaimer, leaving only allowed claims 8-19 pending.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicant again requests that the Examiner consider the references cited in the Information Disclosure Statement filed on February 16, 2006, make those references of record in the application, and return an initialed copy of the Form PTO/SB/08 submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first and second paragraphs

Claims 1-7 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first and second paragraphs. These rejections are moot in light of the cancellation of claims 1-7 and 20.

Allowable subject matter

Applicant appreciates the indication that claims 8-19 are allowed.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-4 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,698,098 to Ernst et al. ("Ernst") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,902,479 to Fukumori et al. ("Fukumori"). Claims 5-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ernst in view of Fukumori, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,066,391 to Faria et al. ("Faria"). These rejections are moot in light of the cancellation of claims 1-7 and 20. Please note that Applicant intends to prosecute these rejected claims in a continuation application, and thus the cancellation of these claims in this application does not constitute Applicants agreement with this rejection.

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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